# PSCI 2306 - American State Government

**Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 103, CRN 18771**

## Instructor Information

**Dr. Jack Byham, Ph.D.**
Email: jack.byham@tamiu.edu
Office: AIC 327
Office Hours:
MWF 11:05 - 11:55am and TR 4:15 - 5:15pm

## Times and Location

MWF 12pm-12:55pm in Bullock Hall 103

## Course Description

Analysis of state and local government in the United States, with particular emphasis upon the State of Texas. History of state governments; state constitutions; the role of the individual pertaining to the rights and liberties in participation in government; political parties, pressure groups, and the franchised. The state legislature, the governor and state administration, state court system, county municipal organization, and current problems of local government. Prerequisites: Completion of Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Reading requirements, ENGL 1301, or appropriate level developmental course sequence.
Social Sciences Department, College of Arts & Sciences

## Additional Course Information

**Technology-Free Classroom**

This is generally a technology-free classroom. Unless expressly authorized by the professor, students may not use phones, laptops, tablets, smartwatches, earbuds, headphones, AI tools, recording devices, or other electronic devices while class is in session. This policy applies during lectures, discussions, group activities, guided reviews, and other class activities.

Before class begins, phones must be silenced and completely put away in a bag, backpack, or other personal storage—not on the desk or in the student's hand. Electronic devices should remain silenced and put away throughout the class period. Temporarily leaving the classroom does not create an exception to this policy; students should not use their phones or other electronic devices during brief trips outside the classroom while class remains in session. If an urgent or unusual circumstance requires access to a phone, please speak with the professor.

Audio recording, video recording, photography, livestreaming, or any other recording of the professor, students, classroom discussion, course materials, or classroom activities is prohibited unless expressly authorized by the professor.

When technology is required for a particular activity, the professor will expressly authorize its use. For example, students will use a laptop to complete in-class Blackboard quizzes. During such quizzes, the laptop may be used only for the authorized Blackboard activity; all other devices, websites, applications, notes, AI tools, and outside resources remain prohibited unless specifically authorized.

Students who believe they require an exception to this policy for disability-related reasons should work through the Office of Disability Services. Students with approved accommodations through the Office of Disability Services are entitled to use any technology, recording method, or assistive device authorized by their accommodation letter.

**AI Policy**

Unless otherwise noted by the instructor, all assignments submitted for a grade should be your own original work, created for this class. Some student work may be submitted to AI or plagiarism detection tools in order to ensure that student work product is human created. The submission of AI generated answers is a form of plagiarism, and plagiarism is a violation of TAMIU's student code of conduct. When in doubt, always do your own work.

# Student Learning Outcomes

Critical Thinking: Students will be able to investigate the structure and function of Texas state and local government by applying political science concepts and frameworks to explain institutions, processes, and policy outcomes.

Communication: Students will be able to construct clear and well-supported written and/or oral arguments analyzing political issues in Texas, using appropriate evidence and organization.

Specialized Knowledge: Students will be able to recognize and critically analyze key institutions, actors, and debates in Texas politics, including federalism, state constitutions, political participation, and public policy.

# Important Dates

Visit the Academic Calendar (tamiu.edu) (https://www.tamiu.edu/academiccalendar/) page to view the term's important dates.

# Textbooks

| Group | Title | Author | ISBN |
|---|---|---|---|
| Required | Practicing Texas Politics, 19th edition | Brown et al. | 9798214145143 |

---

# Other Course Materials

Students must bring full-size notebook paper and a pen or pencil to class each day to be prepared for in-class graded assignments.

# Grading Criteria

Each week you will complete assignments designed to help you reflect on your learning, practice applying concepts, and connect course material to real-world Texas politics. Your grade will be based on the following components:

**In-Class Activities & Guided Quiz Reviews – 20%**

Wednesday classes will include a structured group activity designed to apply the week's concepts to a problem, scenario, debate, or current political issue. During these exercises, phones, laptops, tablets, AI tools, and outside internet resources may not be used unless specifically authorized. Students will put their name on and submit a group or individual activity sheet as evidence of participation.

Also in this grade category are guided quiz reviews completed in groups on Fridays in preparation for Friday's in-class quizzes. Again, phones, laptops, tablets, AI tools, and outside internet resources may not be used unless specifically authorized.

All assignments in this category are graded primarily for preparation, participation, and completion.

**Cengage Assignments – 20%**

Each module includes graded Cengage activities, which are to be completed on the Cengage MindTap platform. To access the platform you must create your Cengage account. Access the instructions for creating your account in the link above Module 1, entitled "Create your Cengage MindTap Account."

MindTap provides the outside-of-class preparation and practice for each module. Graded MindTap work normally includes Case Studies, Simulations, and MindTap quizzes. Assigned readings, flashcards, Learn It activities, and similar preparation activities are assigned but weighted at 0% within MindTap unless otherwise indicated. MindTap assignments are due Thursdays by 11:59 p.m. so that they can help prepare you for Friday's guided review and in-class quiz.

Graded Cengage MindTap assignments include:

- Case Studies (applied understanding)
- Simulations (interactive scenarios . . . except for module 2, which contains no simulation)
- Quizzes (multiple-choice comprehension checks)

Ungraded Cengage MindTap assignments include:

- The reading for each module (one textbook chapter per module) is assigned but not graded.
- Flashcards, which review important terms, are assigned but not graded.
- Learn It Activities (brief, focused instruction)
- Other optional MindTap learning activities may be completed for additional practice but are not graded.

MindTap Academic Integrity Policy: MindTap assignments are intended to help you learn and practice the course material independently. Unless otherwise authorized by the professor, students may not use AI tools, internet searches, answer-sharing websites, outside solution guides, or other unauthorized resources while completing graded MindTap activities. Students should rely on the assigned textbook, course materials, and their own understanding of the material. Although these assignments are completed outside the classroom, the same standards of academic integrity apply to them as to work completed in class.

**Weekly In-Class Quizzes – 20%**

A short Blackboard quiz will be given in class on Fridays after the guided quiz review. Quizzes are normally worth 10 points and consist primarily of objective questions covering the week's chapter, lecture, and class activities. Quizzes are closed-book and closed-note unless the instructor announces otherwise.

- Quizzes must be completed during the scheduled class period. The quiz will normally remain hidden in Blackboard until the instructor releases it in class.
- Students must bring a charged laptop capable of accessing Blackboard on quiz days. Phones may not be used to take the quiz unless specifically authorized.
- Phones, notes, outside websites, AI tools, and unauthorized applications are prohibited during the quiz.
- Students must remain in the classroom until the professor dismisses the class.
- A Blackboard quiz attempt submitted by a student who was not present for the in-class review and quiz session may be invalidated unless an alternate arrangement was approved by the instructor.
- Blackboard quizzes are automatically graded, but correct answers may be withheld until all of the professor's face-to-face sections of this course have completed the quiz.

**Midterm Exam – 15%**

Covers material from the first half of the course.

Combination of multiple-choice, short answer, and essays.

The midterm exam is taken online from home and will be available Oct. 9-10.

Requires Respondus Lockdown Browser + Monitor.

**Final Exam – 20%**

Covers material from the second half of the course, with some cumulative elements.

Combination of multiple-choice, short answer, and essays.

The final exam is taken online from home and will be available Dec. 4-6.

Requires Respondus Lockdown Browser + Monitor.

**Course Evaluation – 5%**

Completion of the official course evaluation during the week of Nov. 16-22 is required and counts toward your final grade. To receive credit for completing the evaluation, send evidence of having completed the evaluation to the professor in a screenshot via a Blackboard message. A screenshot

of the evaluation completion confirmation suffices to receive the credit. Do not send a screenshot of the evaluation itself, which should remain anonymous.

## Grading Breakdown

| GRADE | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|
| A | 90-100 |
| B | 80-89 |
| C | 70-79 |
| D | 60-69 |
| F | Below 60 |

## Other Course Policies

**Attendance and Participation**

Students are expected to attend class regularly, arrive on time, and participate in classroom activities and discussions. Attendance does not replace the requirement to complete assigned work in Blackboard and MindTap. Students are responsible for material, instructions, and announcements presented during class, including when absent.

**Late Assignment Policy**

Assignments are due by the posted deadlines. Late submissions will generally be penalized unless prior arrangements have been made due to documented, professor-approved circumstances. Unless otherwise specified, work submitted after the deadline but within seven days will receive a 15-percentage-point late penalty. After seven days, submissions will no longer be accepted, except where required by university policy or otherwise approved by the instructor. This late-submission window applies to work that can reasonably be completed outside class; in-class quizzes and activities are governed by the Make-Up Policy below.

**Make-Up Policy**

Make-up assignments, in-class activities, quizzes, or exams are only available in cases of documented emergencies, illness, university-approved activities, or other circumstances approved by the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor as soon as possible if they anticipate or experience a situation requiring a make-up. Unexcused work not submitted within the permitted late-submission window, or unexcused in-class work that is missed, will receive a grade of zero.

**E-mail Response and Assignment Feedback**

I will normally respond to student emails within 24-48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. Grades and feedback on most assignments will normally be returned within one week; larger assignments may require up to two weeks.

## Schedule of Topics and Assignments

| Week of | Agenda/Topic | Reading(s) | Due |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8/24 | The Environment of Texas Politics | Brown et al., Ch. 1 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |
| 8/31 | Federalism and the Texas Constitution | Brown et al., Ch. 2 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |
| 9/7 | Local Governments | Brown et al., Ch. 3 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |
| 9/14 | Political Parties | Brown et al., Ch. 4 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |
| 9/21 | Elections and Voter Participation | Brown et al., Ch. 5 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9/28 | The Media and Politics | Brown et al., Ch. 6 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |
| 10/5 | Interest Groups, Social Movements, and Civic Engagement | Brown et al., Ch. 7 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz<br>Midterm Exam, Oct. 10-11 |
| 10/12 | The Legislative Branch | Brown et al., Ch. 8 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |
| 10/19 | The Executive Branch | Brown et al., Ch. 9 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |
| 10/26 | The Judicial Branch | Brown et al., Ch. 10 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |
| 11/2 | Finance and Fiscal Policy | Brown et al., Ch. 11 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |
| 11/9 | Public Policy and Administration | Brown et al., Ch. 12 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |
| 11/16 | The Criminal Justice System | Brown et al., Ch. 13 | Cengage Assignments<br>In-Class Activity<br>Guided Review + Quiz |
| 11/30 | | | Final Exam, Dec. 4-6 |

# Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes

Core-Curriculum Learning Outcomes:

1. **Critical Thinking Skills (CT)** - creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
2. **Communication Skills (COM)** - effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
3. **Social Responsibility (SR)** - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
4. **Personal Responsibility (PR)** - ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

# University/College Policies

Please see the University Policies below.

## COVID-19 Related Policies

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, please refer to the Student Handbook, Appendix A (Attendance Rule) for instructions.

## Required Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class in person (or virtually, if the class is online) and to complete all assignments. If you cannot attend class, it is your responsibility to communicate absences with your professors. The faculty member will decide if your excuse is valid and thus may provide lecture materials of the class. According to University policy, acceptable reasons for an absence, which cannot affect a student's grade, include:

- Participation in an authorized University activity.
- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family.
- Illness of a dependent family member.
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- Religious holy day.

- Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
- Required participation in military duties.
- Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled.

Students are responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to faculty members within seven calendar days of their absence and return to class. They must substantiate the reason for the absence. If the absence is excused, faculty members must either provide students with the opportunity to make up the exam or other work missed, or provide a satisfactory alternative to complete the exam or other work missed within 30 calendar days from the date of absence. Students who miss class due to a University-sponsored activity are responsible for identifying their absences to their instructors with as much advance notice as possible.

## Classroom Behavior (applies to online or Face-to-Face Classes)

In the classroom, students are expected to listen attentively, participate respectfully, and adhere to established rules. Behavior that interferes with the class lecture may result in disciplinary action, ensuring a productive and respectful learning environment for everyone. Any disputes over academic matters should be addressed calmly and constructively, ideally during designated times such as office hours or after class. If a student does not agree with a decision, they can request a meeting with the instructor to discuss their concerns in more detail. Should further resolution be needed, the student may escalate the matter to the department head or use formal grievance procedures as outlined in the sections below. (please refer to Student Handbook Article 4 (https://www.tamiu.edu/handbook/article-04.shtml)).

## TAMIU Honor Code: Plagiarism and Cheating

As a TAMIU student, you are bound by the TAMIU Honor Code to conduct yourself ethically in all your activities as a TAMIU student and to report violations of the Honor Code. Please read carefully the Student Handbook Article 7 and Article 10 available at Student Handbook (https://www.tamiu.edu/handbook/index.shtml).

We are committed to strict enforcement of the Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code tend to involve claiming work that is not one's own, most commonly plagiarism in written assignments and any form of cheating on exams and other types of assignments.

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own. It occurs when you:

1. Borrow someone else's facts, ideas, or opinions and put them entirely in your own words. You must acknowledge that these thoughts are not your own by immediately citing the source in your paper. Failure to do this is plagiarism.
2. Borrow someone else's words (short phrases, clauses, or sentences), you must enclose the copied words in quotation marks as well as citing the source. Failure to do this is plagiarism.
3. Present someone else's paper or exam (stolen, borrowed, or bought) as your own. You have committed a clearly intentional form of intellectual theft and have put your academic future in jeopardy. This is the worst form of plagiarism.

Here is another explanation from the 2020, seventh edition of the Manual of The American Psychological Association (APA):

"Plagiarism is the act of presenting the words, idea, or images of another as your own; it denies authors or creators of content the credit they are due. Whether deliberate or unintentional, plagiarism violates ethical standards in scholarship" (p. 254). This same principle applies to the illicit use of AI.

**Plagiarism**: Researchers do not claim the words and ideas of another as their own; they give credit where credit is due. Quotations marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. Each time you paraphrase another author (i.e., summarize a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words), you need to credit the source in the text. The key element of this principle is that authors do not present the work of another as if it were their own words. This can extend to ideas as well as written words. If authors model a study after one done by someone else, the originating author should be given credit. If the rationale for a study was suggested in the discussion section of someone else's article, the person should be given credit. Given the free exchange of ideas, which is very important for the health of intellectual discourse, authors may not know where an idea for a study originated. If authors do know, however, they should acknowledge the source; this includes personal communications (p. 11). For guidance on proper documentation, consult the Academic Success Center or a recommended guide to documentation and research such as the Manual of the APA or the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. If you still have doubts concerning proper documentation, seek advice from your instructor prior to submitting a final draft.

TAMIU has penalties for plagiarism and cheating.

- **Penalties for Plagiarism**: Should a faculty member discover that a student has committed plagiarism, the student should receive a grade of 'F' in that course and the matter will be referred to the Honor Council for possible disciplinary action. The faculty member, however, may elect to give freshmen and sophomore students a "zero" for the assignment and to allow them to revise the assignment up to a grade of "F" (50%) if they believe that the student plagiarized out of ignorance or carelessness and not out of an attempt to deceive in order to earn an unmerited grade; the instructor must still report the offense to the Honor Council. This option should not be available to juniors, seniors, or graduate students, who cannot reasonably claim ignorance of documentation rules as an excuse. For repeat offenders in undergraduate courses or for an offender in any graduate course, the penalty for plagiarism is likely to include suspension or expulsion from the university.

- *Caution*: Be very careful what you upload to Turnitin or send to your professor for evaluation. Whatever you upload for evaluation will be considered your final, approved draft. If it is plagiarized, you will be held responsible. The excuse that "it was only a draft" will not be accepted.
- *Caution*: Also, do not share your electronic files with others. If you do, you are responsible for the possible consequences. If another student takes your file of a paper and changes the name to his or her name and submits it and you also submit the paper, we will hold both of you responsible for plagiarism. It is impossible for us to know with certainty who wrote the paper and who stole it. And, of course, we cannot know if there was collusion between you and the other student in the matter.

- **Penalties for Cheating**: Should a faculty member discover a student cheating on an exam or quiz or other class project, the student should receive a "zero" for the assignment and not be allowed to make the assignment up. The incident should be reported to the chair of the department and to the Honor Council. If the cheating is extensive, however, or if the assignment constitutes a major grade for the course (e.g., a final exam), or if the student has cheated in the past, the student should receive an "F" in the course, and the matter should be referred to the Honor Council. Additional penalties, including suspension or expulsion from the university may be imposed. Under no circumstances should a student who deserves an "F" in the course be allowed to withdraw from the course with a "W."
  - *Caution*: Chat groups that start off as "study groups" can easily devolve into "cheating groups." Be very careful not to join or remain any chat group if it begins to discuss specific information about exams or assignments that are meant to require individual work. If you are a member of such a group and it begins to cheat, you will be held responsible along with all the other members of the group. The TAMIU Honor Code requires that you report any such instances of cheating.
- **Student Right of Appeal**: Faculty will notify students immediately via the student's TAMIU e- mail account that they have submitted plagiarized work. Students have the right to appeal a faculty member's charge of academic dishonesty by notifying the TAMIU Honor Council of their intent to appeal as long as the notification of appeal comes within 10 business days of the faculty member's e-mail message to the student and/or the Office of Student Conduct and Community Engagement. The Student Handbook provides more details.

## Use of Work in Two or More Courses

You may not submit work completed in one course for a grade in a second course unless you receive explicit permission to do so by the instructor of the second course. In general, you should get credit for a work product only once.

## AI Policies

Your instructor will provide you with their personal policy on the use of AI in the classroom setting and associated coursework.

## TAMIU E-Mail and SafeZone

Personal Announcements sent to students through TAMIU E-mail (tamiu.edu or dusty email) are the official means of communicating course and university business with students and faculty –not the U.S. Mail and no other e-mail addresses. Students and faculty must check their TAMIU e-mail accounts regularly, if not daily. Not having seen an important TAMIU e-mail or message from a faculty member, chair, or dean is not accepted as an excuse for failure to take important action.

Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to download the SafeZone app, which is a free mobile app for all University faculty, staff, and students. SafeZone allows you to: report safety concerns (24/7), get connected with mental health professionals, activate location sharing with authorities, and anonymously report incidents. Go to SafeZone (https://www.tamiu.edu/adminis/police/safezone/index.shtml) for more information.

## Copyright Restrictions

The Copyright Act of 1976 grants to copyright owners the exclusive right to reproduce their works and distribute copies of their work. Works that receive copyright protection include published works such as a textbook. Copying a textbook without permission from the owner of the copyright may constitute copyright infringement. Civil and criminal penalties may be assessed for copyright infringement. Civil penalties include damages up to $100,000; criminal penalties include a fine up to $250,000 and imprisonment. Copyright laws do not allow students and professors to make photocopies of copyrighted materials, but you may copy a limited portion of a work, such as article from a journal or a chapter from a book for your own personal academic use or, in the case of a professor, for personal, limited classroom use. In general, the extent of your copying should not suggest that the purpose or the effect of your copying is to avoid paying for the materials. And, of course, you may not sell these copies for a profit. Thus, students who copy textbooks to avoid buying them or professors who provide photocopies of textbooks to enable students to save money are violating the law.

## Students with Disabilities

Texas A&M International University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal education opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Office of Disability Services for Students located in Student Center 124. This office will contact the faculty member to recommend specific, reasonable accommodations. Faculty are prohibited from making accommodations based solely on communications from students. They may make accommodations only when provided documentation by the Office of Disability Services for Students.

For accommodations or assistance with disabilities, contact the Disability Coordinator, Karla Pedraza, at karla.pedraza@tamiu.edu, call 956.326.2763, or visit Student Center 124.

## Student Attendance and Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy

As part of our efforts to assist and encourage all students towards graduation, TAMIU provides
LOA's for students, including pregnant/parenting students, in accordance with the Attendance Rule (Section 3.07) and the Student LOA Rule (Section 3.08), which includes the "Leave of Absence Request" form. Both rules can be found in the TAMIU Student Handbook (URL: Student Handbook (https://www.tamiu.edu/handbook/index.shtml)).

## Pregnant and Parenting Students

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, harassment based on sex, including harassment because of pregnancy or related conditions, is prohibited. A pregnant/parenting student must be granted an absence for as long as the student's physician deems the absence medically necessary. It is a violation of Title IX to ask for documentation relative to the pregnant/parenting student's status beyond what would be required for other medical conditions. Students who experience or observe alleged or suspected discrimination due to their pregnant/parenting status, should report to the TAMIU Title IX Coordinator (Lorissa M. Cortez, 5201 University Boulevard, KLM 159B, Laredo, TX 78041, TitleIX@tamiu.edu, 956.326.2857) and/or the Office of Civil Rights (Dallas Office, U.S. Department of Education, 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620, Dallas, TX 75201-6810, 214.661.9600). You can also report it on TAMIU's anonymous electronic reporting site, *Report It*, at https://www.tamiu.edu/reportit (https://www.tamiu.edu/reportit/index.shtml).

TAMIU advises a pregnant/parenting student to notify their professor once the student is aware that accommodations for such will be necessary. It is recommended that the student and professor develop a reasonable plan for the student's completion of missed coursework or assignments. The Office of Compliance (Lorissa M. Cortez, lorissam.cortez@tamiu.edu) can assist the student and professor in working out the reasonable accommodation. For other questions or concerns regarding Title IX compliance related to pregnant/parenting students, contact the Title IX Coordinator. In the event that a student needs a leave of absence for a substantial period of time, TAMIU urges the student to consider a Leave of Absence (LOA) as outlined in the TAMIU *Student Handbook*.#As part of our efforts to assist and encourage all students towards graduation, TAMIU provides LOAs for students, including pregnant/parenting students, in accordance with the Attendance Rule and the Student LOA Rule.#Both rules can be found in the TAMIU *Student Handbook*.

For parenting-related rights, accommodations, and resources, contact the Parenting Liaison, Mayra Hernandez, at mghernandez@tamiu.edu, call 956.326.2265, or visit Student Center 226.

For pregnancy-related rights, accommodations, and resources, contact the TIX Coordinator, Lorissa Cortez, at lorissaM.cortez@tamiu.edu, call 956.326.2857, or visit Killam Library 159.

## Anti-Discrimination/Title IX

TAMIU does not discriminate or permit harassment against any individual on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, educational programs, or employment. If you would like to file a complaint relative to Title IX or any civil rights violation, please contact the TAMIU Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity/Title IX Coordinator, Lorissa M. Cortez, 5201 University Boulevard, Killam Library 159B, Laredo, TX 78041, TitleIX@tamiu.edu, 956.326.2857, via the anonymous electronic reporting website, ReportIt (https://www.tamiu.edu/reportit) and/or the Office of Civil Rights (Dallas Office), U.S. Department of Education, 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620, Dallas, TX 75201-6810, 214.661.9600.

## Incompletes

Students who are unable to complete a course should withdraw from the course before the final date for withdrawal and receive a "W." To qualify for an "incomplete" and thus have the opportunity to complete the course at a later date, a student must meet the following criteria:

1. The student must have completed 90% of the course work assigned before the final date for withdrawing from a course with a "W", and the student must be passing the course;
2. The student cannot complete the course because an accident, an illness, or a traumatic personal or family event occurred after the final date for withdrawal from a course;
3. The student must sign an "Incomplete Grade Contract" and secure signatures of approval from the professor and the college dean.
4. The student must agree to complete the missing course work before the end of the next long semester; failure to meet this deadline will cause the "I" to automatically be converted to an "F"; extensions to this deadline may be granted by the dean of the college. This is the general policy regarding the circumstances under which an "incomplete" may be granted, but under exceptional circumstances, a student may receive an incomplete who does not meet all of the criteria above if the faculty member, department chair, and dean recommend it.

## WIN Contracts

The Department of Biology and Chemistry does not permit WIN contracts. For other departments within the college, WIN Contracts are offered only under exceptional circumstances and are limited to graduating seniors. Only courses offered by full-time TAMIU faculty or TAMIU instructors are

eligible to be contracted for the WIN requirement. However, a WIN contract for a course taught by an adjunct may be approved, with special permission from the department chair and dean. Students must seek approval before beginning any work for the WIN Contract. No student will contract more than one course per semester. Summer WIN Contracts must continue through both summer sessions.

## Student Responsibility for Dropping a Course

It is the responsibility of the student to drop the course before the final date for withdrawal from a course. Faculty members, in fact, may not drop a student from a course without getting the approval of their department chair and dean.

## Independent Study Course

Independent Study (IS) courses are offered only under exceptional circumstances. Required courses intended to build academic skills may not be taken as IS (e.g., clinical supervision and internships). No student will take more than one IS course per semester. Moreover, IS courses are limited to seniors and graduate students. Summer IS course must continue through both summer sessions.

## Grade Changes & Appeals

Faculty are authorized to change final grades only when they have committed a computational error or an error in recording a grade, and they must receive the approval of their department chairs and the dean to change the grade. As part of that approval, they must attach a detailed explanation of the reason for the mistake. Only in rare cases would another reason be entertained as legitimate for a grade change. A student who is unhappy with his or her grade on an assignment must discuss the situation with the faculty member teaching the course. If students believe that they have been graded unfairly, they have the right to appeal the grade using a grade appeal process in the Student Handbook and in the Faculty Handbook.

## Final Examination

All courses in all colleges must include a comprehensive exam or performance and be given on the date and time specified by the Academic Calendar and the Final Exam schedule published by the Registrar's Office. In the College of Arts & Sciences all final exams must contain a written component. The written component should comprise at least 20% of the final exam grade. Exceptions to this policy must receive the approval of the department chair and the dean at the beginning of the semester.

## Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it. The Telus app is available to download directly from TELUS (tamiu.edu) (https://www.tamiu.edu/counseling/telus/) or from the Apple App Store and Google Play.